



Metropolitan Planning Organization

for the Miami Urbanized Area

# Transportation Voice

**Public Involvement:  
Reaching out to communities**

Fall 2005

## Citizens Involved in Transportation Planning

The public is not a bystander in the transportation planning process, but rather plays an active role in every phase of the decision-making process. Transportation projects can greatly affect the environment and quality of life of any citizen/stakeholder, which is why public involvement is an important component of the success of any transportation plan. In 1964, Congress, under the Civil Rights Act, adopted Title IV, to ensure equal and fair-treatment of individuals when state and local transportation agencies begin their planning process.

In an effort to comply with Executive Order 12898 (Federal actions to address environmental justice in minority populations) and low-income populations, government agencies have begun to develop more effective public involvement strategies. Through these strategies, affected communities are made

aware of the likely benefits and consequences of a project. The following are strategies the Miami-Dade Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) has incorporated to reach out to communities:

- ♦ Participate in Community Outreach Events;
- ♦ Produce Public Service Announcements;
- ♦ Access the Awareness and Availability Program;
- ♦ Utilize the Community Characteristics Program; and
- ♦ Provide access to transportation opportunities.

These initiatives provide the tools, procedures, and structure needed to create, implement, and evaluate public involvement programs and projects. This process has allowed the MPO to better assess the effectiveness of its outreach efforts, which has led to the most appropriate application of public involvement strategies.



## Ever Wonder...

*How the MPO distributes its information?*

*How to involve students in the transportation planning process?*

*How the MPO reaches out to the community?*

*How you can get involved?*

Look inside to find out how...



## Did you know?

The MPO tracks correspondence as well as outreach and media events in a centralized database. The following are statistics from July 2004 to July 2005.

<b>Citizen Comments Entered:</b>	<b>490</b>
<b>Outreach Events:</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Media Events:</b>	<b>14</b>

### Contacted MPO by:

Emails:	72
Faxes:	2
LRTP Workshops:	22
Mail:	62
Outreach Events:	248
Phone:	81
WalkIns:	3

### Heard about the MPO from:

Emails:	3
Flyers:	10
Friends:	2
Miami-Dade Transit:	4
MPO Citizen Committee:	12
MPO Newsletters:	74
MPO Website:	58
Newspaper ads:	28
Other:	51
Outreach Events:	245
Radio Ads:	3

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## Student Creativity Engages the Public

**G**overnment agencies are constantly looking for ways to get young citizens involved with the transportation planning process. The Miami-Dade County Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), in coordination with Miami-Dade County's Communications Department, has created an Annual Public Service Announcement (PSA) Contest among all high schools and colleges in Miami-Dade County.

The purpose of the PSA Contest is to educate students on the role of the MPO and to create a 30 second video portraying the many ways the public can get involved with the transportation planning process.

Elizabeth Rockwell, Public Involvement



MPO Governing Board Members honor students

Manager, stated, "This contest is a two-part outreach effort in that it is a great way for staff to educate students about the MPO and the planning transportation process and then let them, in turn, take their interpretations to video and educate the viewing public."

There were approximately 200 applicants this year and MPO Director, Jose-Luis Mesa stated, "The PSA contest is a good introduction for students that have not heard of the MPO. I am excited about the future of

this contest." This year is the first time high school students participated in the PSA contest.

This is the first step in creating a direct link between the future leaders of America and the future of transportation planning.

## MPO Staff



Kendale Elementary Career Day



Team Metro P.R.I.D.E. Week



Cutler Ridge Police Station Open House



HOT 105.1 Interview

For more information on MPO outreach ever

## f Reaches Out



WQBA 1140 AM Interview



WB39 Interview



Miami Riverday



Homestead Neighborhood Service Center

nts, visit our website at: [www.miamidade.gov/mpo](http://www.miamidade.gov/mpo)

## The Key to Public Involvement

**E**very community is different. As a result, a system has been developed that will help transportation planners and public involvement officers disseminate information to an area in a manner that best suits its demographics.

The Community Characteristics Program (CCP) is a web-based tool that helps create an effective public involvement program that will ultimately allow the identification of the attitudes and issues facing a particular community. Public involvement strategies are modified according to the community's characteristics, such as, but not limited to, literacy rates, income levels, cultural composition, and religious affiliation. For example, if an area has a low literacy rate, it would be more effective to use audio and visual aids rather than to dis-

tribute brochures, hand-outs, and other reading materials. By utilizing the CCP, staff has access to this invaluable information to tailor its outreach approach to determine a community's stand on a project and work with that community to gather support.

Staff can input a particular project area and it will give me a detailed report containing information related to age groups, languages spoken, educational backgrounds, a break down of ethnic representation, the average income per household, and the total population of that area. The program then suggests strategies to reach out to the community and even provides a historical background report. This takes a lot of the "guess work" out so that project managers can focus on the community itself. Visit the CCP at <http://mpoportal.fiu.edu>.

## Access to Opportunities

**T**he MPO is providing opportunities to citizens by being available to them to hear what they have to say about

Miami-Dade transportation system and any particular concerns they may have.

Staff has been actively participating in outreach events throughout the County providing citizens with the opportunity to access resources and information about transportation plans/programs they may otherwise be unaware of. The MPO has taken a proactive stance by discussing the use of alternate modes and discussing concerns during events. Particular issues that a citizen may be facing are discussed in hopes of developing a solution that benefits all parties involved.



MPO Staff speaks with a concerned citizen

The MPO website was established with the intent to create an interactive experience that provided user-friendly data and information about the various MPO related

transportation functions and activities. The website is 24-hour accessible on-line resource where the community can immediately access calendars, members, interactive maps, links to related sites, general study information, and electronic versions of Newsletters and

major documents can be accessed. Users can call, email or fax staff if they have any comments.

While outreach events are opportunities for citizens to gain direct access to the MPO, the website caters to those seeking an alternate way to get involved. In turn, both have created a venue in which citizens are given opportunities to access opportunities.

## Send us your comments!

Give us your ideas on transportation!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

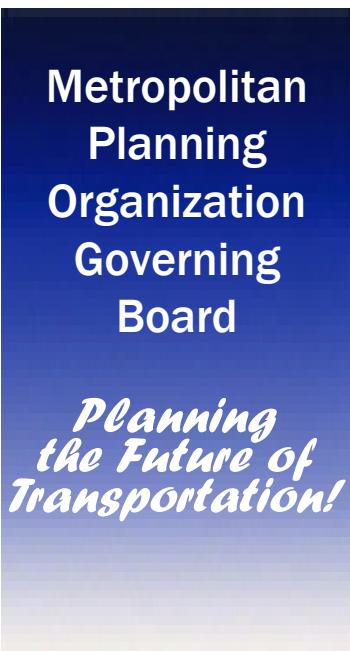
You can also:

E-mail your comments to:  
[mpo@miamidade.gov](mailto:mpo@miamidade.gov)

Mail your comments to:

Miami-Dade MPO  
111 NW First Street, Suite 910  
Miami, FL 33128-1999

Call us at: 305-375-4507



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MPO Secretariat

Jose-Luis Mesa, Ph.D.

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